

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend Claims 1, 8, 16, 24, 25, 37 and 41 as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material having an elastic property aligned in one direction, comprising:

either one multilayer composite including at least one layer in which a blend of an elastic polymer and a non-elastic polymer composed of fibers or filaments is contained,

or a homogeneous fiber and filament mix in which a portion of the fibers is made from an elastic polymer and a portion made from a non-elastic polymer,

wherein ~~at least a predominant amount~~ majority of the fibers or filaments in said layer or mix is drawn and aligned in a direction under the application of heat which extends transversely to the direction in which the nonwoven material is elastic.

2. (Original) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the multilayer composite contains elastic meltblown fibers and spunbond fibers.

3. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2, wherein the elastic meltblown fibers contain bicomponent fibers having an elastic portion.

4. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 3, wherein the spunbond fibers are not elastic.

5. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the homogeneous fiber mix is composed of a needle felt and/or a spunlaced product to which elastic fibers have been added.

6. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein a homogeneous fiber mix of a needle felt and/or a spunlaced product is combined with at least one layer of elastic meltdown fibers and/or spunbound fibers.

7. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the needle felt and the spunlaced product also include viscose or natural fibers such as cellulose in addition to synthetic fibers.

8. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein one or more meltblown layers (M) are arranged between one or more spunbond layers (S), with the elastomeric layers being contained at least in one ~~melt~~down meltblown layer.

9. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the elastic nonwoven material is a liquid barrier layer or a particle retention layer.

10. (Original) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 9, wherein the property as a liquid barrier layer or a particle retention layer also remains maintained after drawing or stretching the nonwoven material.

11. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, having stretchability amounts to 0-700%.

12. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, having recovery (recovery property) amounts to at least 60% on a two-fold stretching by 100%.

13. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, having recovery (contracting property) amounts to at least 50% on a two fold stretching by 150%.

14. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, which is breathable.

15. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, which is hydrophilic.

16. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2, wherein a polymer having elastic properties is used as the meltblown fiber and having ~~similar~~ flow properties ~~[[()]]~~ with respect to the rheological and viscosity properties~~[[()]]~~ as flow properties of polypropylene.

Claim 17. Canceled

18. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 16, wherein the meltblown fibers are composed of the following mixture: more than 60% by weight of a triblock copolymer consisting of 70% by weight of styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene and 30% by weight of styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene, where the polystyrene portion of the polymer is 14% by weight, 5-35% by weight of polypropylene suitable for processing in a meltblown method and an anti-blocking agent to improve flow properties.

19. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 18, wherein the meltblown fibers are composed of an elastic polyolefine.

20. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 18, wherein the meltblown fibers are composed of a thermoplastic elastic polyurethane.

21. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein, with a multilayer design, in addition to at least one meltblown layer having elastic fibers, spunbond layers made of one of the following materials are present: of polyolefine or polyester, or bicomponent polymer based on polypropylene and polyethylene, or of a polypropylene or polyester mixed with a bicomponent polypropylene/polyethylene or of an elastic polymer such as polyurethane, polystyrene block copolymer or an elastic polypropylene and/or polypropylene.

22. (Original) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 21, wherein the spunbond layers and/or meltblown layers have a different design.

23. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the layers of the multilayer design are bonded to one another by at least one of needlepunching, spunlacing, thermobonding, calendering with smooth rolls and/or engraved rolls and infrared bonding.

24. (Currently amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2, wherein basis weight of the multilayer design amounts to 7 g/m<sup>2</sup> up to 400 g/m<sup>2</sup>, where the elastic meltblown layers amount to 1 to 60% by weight of the nonwoven material.

25. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2, wherein basis weight of the needle nonwoven/spunlaced product or needle nonwoven together with elastic meltblown layers amounts to 40-700 g/m<sup>2</sup>, where the elastic meltblown layers amount to 1 to 60% by weight of the nonwoven material.

26. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 2, wherein the meltblown layer provided with elastic properties has a fiber thickness of 0.01 to 1.2 denier.

27. (Withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a nonwoven material in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the prefabricated nonwoven material web is drawn either in the running direction or transversely to the running direction for the aligning of the fibers/filaments under the application of heat.

28. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 27, wherein the transport speed in the longitudinal direction, measured in %, is lowered by more than the width increase in % to generate the elastic properties of the nonwoven material in the longitudinal direction and the increase of the basis weight belonging thereto.

29. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 27, wherein the width restriction, measured in %, is higher than the increase of the transport speed in the longitudinal direction, measured in %, to generate elastic properties of the nonwoven material in the transverse direction and the increase of the basis weight belonging thereto.

30. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for the carrying out of the method in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that it has an oven and at least one drawing device to draw the nonwoven material web.

31. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 30, wherein the drawing device to draw the nonwoven material web in the direction transverse to its transport direction has two wheel-shaped gripping apparatuses arranged to the side of the nonwoven material web and having receiving regions arranged at its periphery to grip the nonwoven material web.

32. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the drawing device to draw the nonwoven material web in the direction longitudinal to its transport direction is composed of at least two rolls via which the nonwoven material web is fixed by

friction, wherein it is pulled at a speed higher in comparison with the entry speed of the nonwoven material web into the oven so that the nonwoven material web is drawn in the longitudinal direction.

33. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the drawing device to draw the nonwoven material web in the direction longitudinal to its transport direction is composed of at least two oppositely disposed rolls between which the nonwoven material web is clamped and which are derivable at a higher peripheral speed than entry speed of the nonwoven material web into the oven so that the drawing of the nonwoven material web in the longitudinal direction takes place.

34. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein a temperature is set in the oven between the softening point and the melting point of the respectively processed thermoplastic fibers.

35. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the drawing/pulling speed of the nonwoven material web amounts to 5-150 m/min, preferably to 40-100 m/min, on the drawing into the width.

36. (Withdrawn) An apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the processing speed of the nonwoven material web amounts to 5-400 m/min, preferably to 80-250 m/min, on the drawing in the longitudinal direction.

37.(Currently Amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 8, wherein said one or more ~~meltblown~~ meltblown layers (M) are arranged between one or more spunbound layers (S) in the order of one of SM, SMS, SMMS, SSMMS, SSMMSS.

38.(Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 11, having stretchability amounts to 50-400%.

39.(Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 12, having recovery (recovery property) amounts to at least 80% on a two-fold stretching by 100%.

40.(Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 13, having recovery (contracting property) amounts to at least 70% on a two fold stretching by 150%.

41.(Currently Amended) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 18, wherein the polystyrene portion is (polystyrene/poly(ethylene-butylene)/polystyrene) ~~Kraton G®~~.

42.(Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 19, wherein the meltblown fibers are composed of a metallocene-catalyzed copolymer of the polyethylene and/or polypropylene.

43.(Previously Presented) A nonwoven material in accordance with claim 26, wherein the meltblown layer provided with elastic properties has a fiber thickness of 0.01 to 0.5 denier.